



# Caregivers and Direct Service Providers: AAC Implementation Strategies

This should be accompanied by *Communication Partners: Introduction to ACC and How You Can Help*

## **About me:**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefers to be called: \_\_\_\_\_

AAC Devices/System used: \_\_\_\_\_

My interests and hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Some daily challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **What is autism:**

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. Autism looks different for everyone, and each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges.

## **What I need you to know to support me:**

A good communication partner plays an essential role in helping transition-age youth and adults with autism use AAC confidently and effectively. When communication partners use patience, curiosity and respect, they help AAC users feel heard and confident speaking up in all parts of their lives.

- **Include personal interests:** Add vocabulary for favorite shows, friends, or hobbies so the person can express their interests, not just needs.
- **Encourage self-advocacy:** Use the AAC to teach expressions like "I need a break," "Don't touch me," or "I don't like that."
- **Use it everywhere:** Bring it along for community outings, appointments and family events so the person can communicate anywhere.
- **Use their words in meaningful ways:** Show that what they communicate leads to action (e.g., if they say "go outside," actually go outside when possible).
- **Maintain and charge devices:** If the individual is in a residential program, assign responsibility to staff on each shift for checking battery levels, charging overnight and cleaning devices appropriately.

Check out this article for additional tips for how to help individuals with autism benefit from using communication devices: [Tips for Using Assistive Technology Devices | Autism Speaks](#)